

# NRCS **NEWS RELEASE**

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## **NRCS Announces National Water Quality Initiative Conservation in Minnesota** *Agricultural Producers located in priority watersheds will be able to participate*

**ST. PAUL, MN, MAY 8, 2012-** State Conservationist Don Baloun announced the launch of a new [National Water Quality Initiative](#) committed to improving three impaired waterways in Minnesota. USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will manage the initiative by making funds available to farmers, ranchers and forest landowners in the selected watersheds.

"The Water Quality Initiative will further NRCS' partnership efforts to improve water quality using voluntary actions on private lands," Baloun said. "This initiative is a focused approach in areas facing significant natural resource challenges. It bolsters the positive results of landscape conservation initiatives NRCS and its partners already have underway."

Through this effort, eligible producers in Chippewa, Elm Creek, and Seven Mile Watersheds will invest in voluntary conservation actions to help provide cleaner water for their neighbors and communities. The selected watersheds were identified with help from state agencies, partners, and the NRCS State Technical Committee.

Using funds from the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, NRCS will provide funding and advise to producers to install conservation practices such as cover crops, filter strips and terraces in watersheds with impairments where the federal investment can make a difference to improve water quality.

"American farmers are good stewards of the environment, especially when they have the tools they need to protect or improve fish and wildlife habitat and water quality," said NRCS Chief Dave White. "We look forward to collaborating with producers in key watersheds to help them have a positive impact on streams with impaired water quality."

Minnesota's three Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC 12) Watersheds for the National Water Quality Initiative include: Chippewa Watershed, Elm Creek Watershed and Sevenmile Creek Watershed. (see Map on page 2). The Chippewa is impaired due to nutrients. All three Watersheds are impaired due to sediment and turbidity. In addition, all three Watersheds have at least one impaired 303 (d) impaired water body and. A HUC 12 Watershed is approximately 20,000 acres in size.

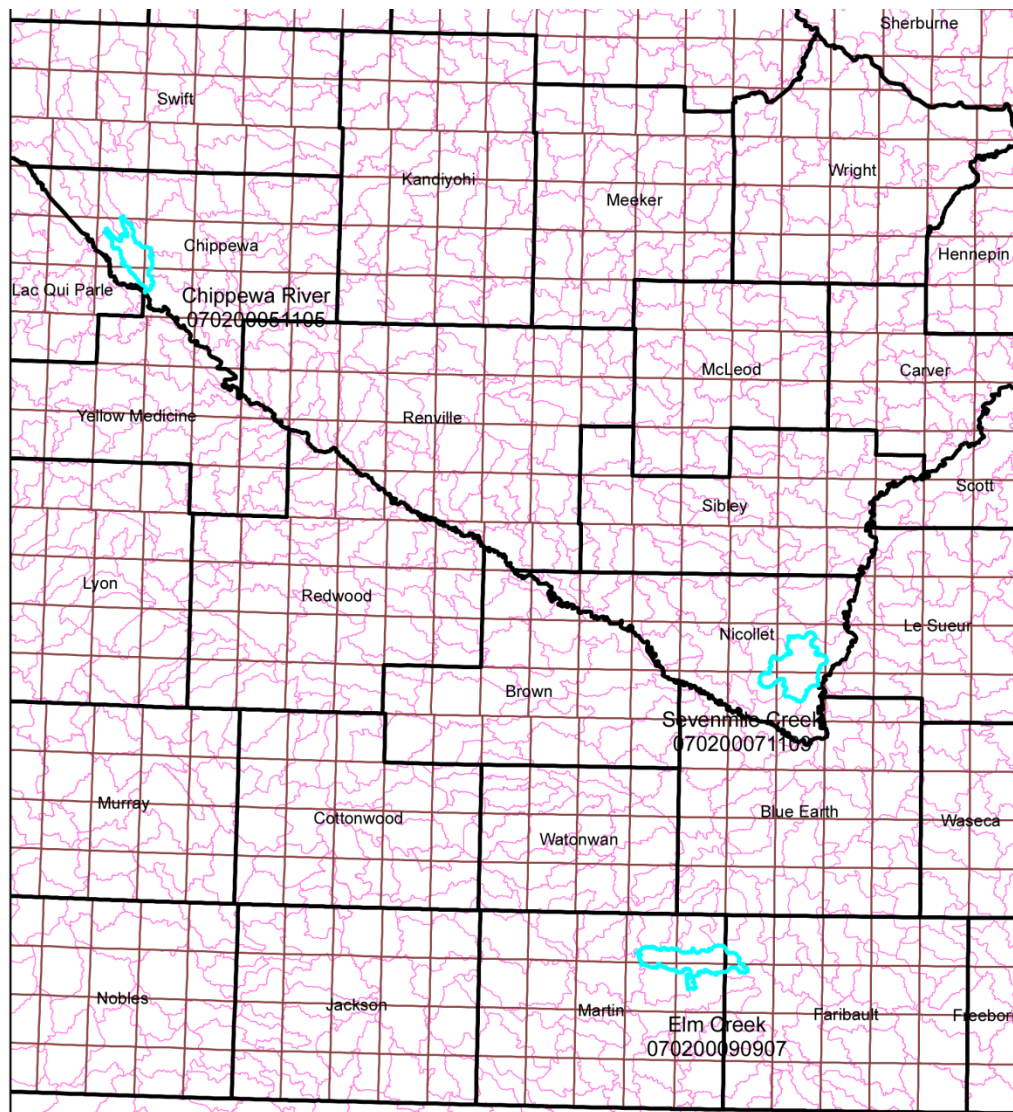
Chippewa Watershed is a tributary to the Chippewa River, located in the western portion of Chippewa County. Elm Creek Watershed is a tributary to Blue Earth River in the Minnesota River Basin and is located in the western portion of Faribault County and the northeastern portion of Martin County. Sevenmile Creek Watershed is located in the Middle Minnesota River Basin in Nicolet County. The primary land use in the Chippewa, Elm Creek and Sevenmile Creek is agriculture.

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NRCS accepts applications for financial assistance on a continuous basis throughout the year. Remember to check with your [local NRCS office](#) to see if you are located in a selected watershed. All applications for funding consideration, during this fiscal year, must be received by June 15, 2012. This summer, NRCS will notify all applicants of the results and begin developing contracts with selected applicants.

Since 1935, NRCS's nationwide conservation delivery system works with private landowners to put conservation on the ground based on specific, local conservation needs, while accommodating state and national interests. For more information about NRCS' programs, initiatives and services in Minnesota, visit us online at [www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov)



*Chippewa Watershed, Elm Creek Watershed and Sevenmile Creek Watershed.*

*(MapMN GIS Staff)*

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